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ABSTRACT

The context for education in Sweden is for a society in which citizens enjoy economic well-being and social provision. The educational system consists of a grundskol and an integrated upper school combining the gymnasium, vocational school, and the professional school preparing students for subuniversity qualifications. Nineteen higher education institutions are being created. Provision for adult education, which is free, takes many forms. A bill has been implemented that provides for vocational orientation and preparation for the world of work through work experience for all grade levels. Problems of vocational orientation include noninvolvement of teachers, little integration of the work experience into the classroom, insufficient work placements, and disagreements as to the main purpose of work experience. Local school boards are responsible for educating all young people under 18 and may run centers for unemployed youth. These characteristics distinguish the Swedish educational system: education as part of a coherent, planned social strategy to build the ideal society; equality of education for each citizen; emphasis on personal development; relationship with the labor market and economic structure of the country; and centralization. Future developments include decentralization of activities from the National Board of Education and changes in upper secondary education. (YLB)

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COMPARATIVE PAPERS IN FURTHER EDUCATION NUMBER NINE
1982

Vocational education and training in Sweden

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Foreword and acknowledgements

This study of the Swedish educational system focusses on the inter-relation of school and society. Sweden is a particularly relevant country in which to examine this connection because its concern about creating an advanced social democracy has involved conscious social engineering in which the education system has been seen as a key part of a total endeavour to build the ideal society. This study looks at some of the issues this has raised for schools and, in particular, the way in which schools are relating to the environment of work and the labour market.

The study is based primarily on four investigatory visits to Sweden by Coombe Lodge staff between 1974 and 1982. Most of the institutions and officials visited were in Goteborg, the Stockholm area, and Uppsala. We have also interviewed Swedish officials at conferences in England and Scotland. We acknowledge, with thanks, our use of the report of the investigation of Eileen Lake, Southfield School for Girls.

The co-operation of the Swedish National Board of Education and the Swedish Institute in providing interviews, reports and information proved particularly valuable. Mostly, however, our thanks are due to the many Swedes who took time from their work to talk to us and answer our questions.

Colin Turner
Penny Rawlings
October 1982

I : Sweden - The country and the people

Sweden is a land of forests and lakes, stretching 977 miles from Trelleborg in the south to the Three Nations Marker in the Arctic Circle where Sweden, Norway and Finland meet. The winters can be very harsh with much of the country covered by snow. Road surfaces are continually broken up by winter weather, making travel in the north extremely difficult for up to six months of the year. Despite this, Sweden has a relatively mild climate in view of its far northerly position and summers are generally warm and pleasant.

Although in area Sweden is the fourth largest country in Europe, its population is comparatively small, only 8,303,000 in 1980 (20 people per square kilometre). The problems of sparse population have been minimised by the drift of working people towards urban areas throughout this century. Recent government policies have encouraged a large part of the remaining rural population to re-settle in towns and city suburbs. Approximately one-third of the present population live in or around the three major cities: Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö (1,384,000, 694,000 and 453,000 respectively in 1980). New towns and suburbs form a dominant feature of the modern landscape with their tall buildings perched in the midst of pine forests and open countryside. Swedes tend to live in high-rise flats, despite a recent move towards small houses, but they usually have the added bonus of a country house: the traditional home kept on when the family moved out.

There have been only two historical periods when Sweden had major influence on the rest of Europe. The Vikings had considerable impact through their agressive raids on European coasts, although most Swedish Vikings were traders who established far-reaching trading routes. In the 16th century, under King Gustav Vasa, Sweden was a large and powerful Baltic country which had acquired Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Ingermanland and parts of Denmark and Germany. Later kings were over-ambitious in their expanionist plans and the 'empire' was lost.

INDUSTRIAL BACKGROUND

In 1870 Sweden was a poor, comparatively backward agricultural country with some small-scale rural-based industry. In just over 100 years it has transformed itself into one of the richest countries in the world. Its GNP per capita exceeds that of all the major industrial countries. (See Table 1, on page 4.)

Table 1

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT PER CAPITA 1979 (US DOLLARS)

Sweden	11,930
Denmark	11,900
FRG	11,730
Belgium	10,920
Norway	10,700
USA	10,630
Netherlands	10,230
France	9,950
UK	6,320

The basis of this expansion was mining, fabrication of metals, and timber. A powerful engineering industry was developed. Few countries of Sweden's size have managed to break so successfully into international markets with such products as automobiles and aircraft. Since 1945 there has been rapid growth in the chemical, plastics and electronics industries. This has compensated for a decline in some traditional areas of employment. Shipbuilding reached a peak in 1976 and is now in decline, and the future of the steel industry is uncertain, but in both cases the industries have been substantially restructured into high quality, highly specialised work related to the future demands of advanced technology. The wood, paper and pulp industries suffered decline in the depression of the mid '70s but is being reorganised to cope with competition from America. The combination housing industry expanded rapidly from 1945 to the peak year of 1970, but there has been a dramatic fall in the number of housing units completed.

Agriculture, fishing and forestry were the staple industries of Sweden's economy. Although the agricultural work force has declined from 20 per cent to 4.6 per cent of those in employment in 20 years, productivity has increased by one-fifth. Fishing has declined from its 1965 peak, partly through the adoption of strong conservation policies. Manpower in forestry has declined considerably, but productivity per man hour increased by 20 per cent between 1970 and 1977. Output is expected to increase in the next decade.

Table 2

WORKING POPULATION BY INDUSTRY

Sector	Dec.'79 000's	1979 % Distribution	% Change 1960-79
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	233	5.5	- 48
Manufacturing, Mining	1,060	25.1	- 6
Construction	290	6.9	- 2
Commerce, Banking, Insurance	800	18.9	+ 67
Transport, Communications	302	7.1	+ 25
Public Administration	1,223	28.9	+244
Other Services	317	7.5	+ 7
TOTAL	4,225	100	+ 30

Personal consumption is high, but public provision as reflected by figures of public consumption as a share of GNP is also higher than any other major industrial country outside the communist block. This is reflected in the social and welfare provision described in the next section.

International economic crises of the last decade have not left Sweden untouched. In 1975-76 GNP rose by only one per cent, and in 1977 it fell by two per cent. The Swedish government took vigorous action which included devaluation of the Krona and strategic investment of public funds in industry. There was an upturn from 1978 with GNP rising by over four per cent for two years, but a further recession in 1980 led to a fall of 0.8 in 1981. The forecast for 1982 is an increase of one per cent. The Government gives high priority to a full employment policy, even if this results in an inflation rate of 10 per cent. The percentage of unemployed hardly rose above two per cent from 1970-80, and though it edged towards three per cent in 1981, it is expected to fall in 1982.

Although there are economic uncertainties in Sweden's future, the most important characteristics of its economy are:

1. It is still a very rich country.

2. Its citizens enjoy a very high level of material living.

3. It provides heavy investment in public provision.

4. Its economic growth appears secure for the next five years.

5. Unemployment is low and likely to stay so.

THE WELFARE STATE

Sweden is renowned for the security and care given to all its citizens. A large proportion of the country's wealth is spent on the provision of public services covering all aspects of living in the so-called 'People's Home'. It is a far cry from the appalling conditions that existed during the latter half of the 19th century when industrialisation hit the agrarian society and peasants were transformed overnight into factory workers. The attempts of social reformers to alleviate the situation were so half-hearted that almost 1,000,000 Swedes (one-fifth of the total population) emigrated to North America in desperation.

The Sweden of the 1930s was not very different from other Western European countries. Trade was recovering after the impact of the first world war and social conditions were slowly beginning to improve. What then, were the factors that brought about the development of its comprehensive welfare state?

To begin with, in 1932, the Social Democrats were elected to government and stayed there for the next 44 years, thereby providing a very stable internal political scene. Secondly, Sweden has had an unbroken tradition of non-aggression since 1815. Material prosperity was also of prime importance. Trade has florished since 1900, providing the country with enough wealth to implement social policies in full. Table 3 on page 7 indicates Sweden's economic standards in comparison with other countries.

The population is relatively stable, with a low birth rate and high life expectancy (Table 4 on page 8). Sweden has a relatively small number of immigrants.

It is characteristic of Swedes that they include education in the social welfare programme as a whole. Access to education is seen as an important aspect of social equality and therefore the individual must have ready access to equal opportunities, hence the countinuing educational reforms.

Table 3

SOME INDICATORS OF ECONOMIC STANDARDS 1976

Country	per 1,000 inhabitants				1000 kg.	coal equiv. 1000 kg.
	Passenger cars	TV licences	Telephones	Newspaper consumption	Paper	Energy
Sweden	350	352	603	332	195	6000
Norway	254	255	366	212	135	5300
Denmark	265	308	494	271	134	5300
FRG	308	306	344	179	112	5900
UK	255	320	394	255	108	5300
France	300	268	293	110	89	4400
USA	507	571	721	415	238	11600
Japan	164	235	426	203	117	3700

It is against this background of economic well-being and social provision that a discussion of the education system must be set.

Table 4

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

	Live births per '000	Deaths per '000	Life Expectancy	Population growth % p.a 1975 - 80
Sweden	11.7	11.0	76	0.2
Denmark	11.2	10.9	75	0.2
FRG	10.0	11.5	73	-0.3
France	14.8	10.1	74	0.3
Netherlands	12.5	8.1	75	0.6
Belgium	12.7	11.6	72	0.1
UK	13.5	8.9	73	-0.1
USA	16.2	8.9	75	0.9

II : The educational system

The old Swedish school system did not differ markedly from the traditional European pattern. Most children went to elementary schools at seven and stayed until the minimum leaving age which moved up over the years until it was 14 by 1940. Some of the brightest pupils plus those from the more prosperous families moved to the **real** school at 11 or 12 for a four or five year course. At the end of the course, students took the real examinations, and then either left school to enter employment, or entered the **gymnasium**. The gymnasium ran a four year course from 15, or a three year course from 16. The work was of high academic standard and was general rather than vocational. Technical gymnasia and commercial gymnasia gave more vocational emphasis.

By the 1940s, about half the population was entering a real school or its equivalent but only 10 per cent reached the gymnasium. The system began to creak as consumer demand and industrial need put greater pressure on the schools catering for post-11 education. Education at post-primary level remained expensive and difficult of access. Few districts had real schools and gymnasia, the number of places was limited, and financial support for students was almost non-existent. Reasonable secondary education was reserved for those who lived in urban areas and could afford to pay fees and other expenses.

THE DECISION TO CHANGE

Faced with growing demand for secondary education and some evidence that socio-economic class was a determining factor in the provision of education, the government appointed an Education Commission in 1940 which, after a series of investigations, proposed in 1946 that a nine-year comprehensive school should replace all other schools up to the age of 16. Although the proposal was accepted in 1950 by the **Riksdag** (the Swedish parliament), there was much disagreement on how the school should be internally organised. A number of schools operated as experimental models and were carefully evaluated, particularly in the achievement of leavers in competition with leavers from traditional schools. In 1962 the Riksdag accepted the nine-year compulsory **grundskol** (comprehensive school) and it was introduced throughout Sweden.

Attention then turned to the post-compulsory area of schooling. The gymnasium was changed to three or four year courses for students entering at 16, not at 15 as previously. It was to be paralleled by two other schools: the professional school running two-year courses, and the vocational school

running a variety of one-to four-year courses. In 1964 the Riksdag decided to co-ordinate the work of these three schools in each district so that a complete range of provision was available. In 1968 it was decided to join the three schools into one institution. This began to be implemented in 1971/72.

Sweden thus developed an educational system on the comprehensive principle which applied throughout the age range, consisting of a grundskol for seven to 16, and an integrated upper school for 16 to 19 year olds (although older students could also attend). In 1973 a parliamentary commission report was published on the comprehensivisation of higher education. This was known as U 68, and with modifications its proposals were incorporated into an education bill which was approved by the Riksdag in 1975.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM

The Grundskol (Comprehensive School)

This school consists of nine years and is commonly divided into three sections: primary, intermediate, and lower secondary. For demographic and geographic reasons, some schools provide only the first two, but all three are usually in the same school.

There are two terms of 20 weeks, with two weeks' holiday at Christmas, one week in February, and one at Easter. The 10-week summer holiday starts early in June. There is a proposal, however, to change to a three-term year.

The school day begins at 8.00 a.m. and its length increases with successive years:

Grade 1	=	20	lessons per week(1 lesson = 40 minutes)
Grade 2	=	22	" " "
Grade 3	=	30	" " "
Grade 4	=	34	" " "
Grades 5 and above	=	35	" " "

The first three grades have a maximum of 25 pupils per class, and the remaining grades a maximum of 30. The curriculum is laid down by the S.Ö. (National Board of Education) though there is some flexibility of application. The subjects covered are as follows, although they are not necessarily taught as separate disciplines:

Primary Section: Swedish, mathematics, religious knowledge, local history and geography, music, and physical education; plus in Grade 3, English and handicrafts.

Intermediate Section: Swedish, mathematics, English, music, drawing, handicrafts, physical education, and general subjects (this collectively describes civics, history, geography, religious knowledge and science).

Lower Secondary Section: Swedish, mathematics, English, music, drawing, handicraft, domestic science/child care, physical education, general subjects. Pupils also choose elective subjects. Up until 1979 these had to be chosen from French, German, art, economics and technology, but a parliamentary act on the new curriculum for the comprehensive school made it possible for **communes** (local authorities) to provide other elective subjects.

The major goals for the grundskol can be summarised as:

Self-realisation by pupils,

Social education,

Equality of educational opportunity.

These three goals are at the intersection of one of the major issues in comprehensive education - the question of differentiation. Sweden, along with the other Nordic countries, has followed strategies aimed at balancing the conflicts that exist within the pursuit of these three aims. The following characteristics are common to the Nordic countries:

1. The aim to preserve each class, integrated and intact, throughout the period of compulsory education.

2. An endeavour to accommodate pupils' need for self-realisation by individual development within the framework of the class and by limited opportunity for choice of subjects.

3. Some degree of organisational differentiation within individual subjects, but not on the basis of academic merit or selective tests, and

in such a way that pupils' choice will not adversely influence their chances for subsequent selection of courses. Streaming or banding is not seen as either educationally or socially justifiable.

It has not been difficult in Sweden to develop practices in accord with the first of these endeavours. In pursuing the second and third there are currently three ways in which differentiation is dealt with:

1. Students from the seventh grade can choose from available optional subjects for three or four periods a week. About two-thirds choose a second foreign language.

2. From the seventh grade, for two periods a week, students can pursue work of their own choice on themes which do not otherwise appear on the curriculum.

3. In some central subjects - French, English, German and mathematics - students can choose either the basic course or a more advanced course.

There are problems still unresolved in the way in which such advanced courses are linked to some of the possibilities open in the upper school, but in most ways the Swedish system exemplifies a comprehensive educational provision which gives equality of access within a context of the unstreamed integrated year class group.

When pupils complete the nine grades of the grundskol they are given a Leaving Certificate which records their level of achievement in all except optional subjects. A five-point scale is used and national standarised tests result in uniformity of marking throughout the country. Tests are administered in spring and autumn in grades 6 and 7, and spring only in grades 8 and 9. There is a current debate on moving from a system of relative marking to goal-related evaluation. The system has been that students were placed in the five categories on the basis of the following percentages:

Categories	5 (highest)	4	3	2	1 (lowest)
Percentage	7	24	38	24	7

Several variants of this have been debated but no new policy has yet emerged other than reducing the importance of marking even further from its fairly minimal level of the present.

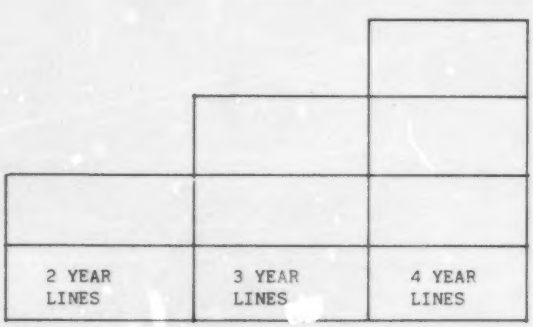
The Upper School

This is now officially known as the upper integrated secondary school, but many schools are still referred to by their pre-reform name of gymnasium. It has considerable similarities to the English tertiary college. The upper school has combined the gymnasium with its academic tradition and conservative curriculum; the vocational school with its multifarious specialised trade courses; and the professional school preparing students for sub-university qualifications in commerce and minor professions. The upper school has been reformed so as to diminish these historic divisions, particularly in so far as they reflect socio-economic or prestige differentiation.

The upper school can offer 23 courses (or lines as they are known in Sweden). These are illustrated in Table 1 (on page 14). The lines can be for two, three or four years, can be theoretical or practical, and can be in arts/social courses, economic courses or technical/science courses. A number of the lines, particularly in the practical technical/science field, have an increasing number of variants as the course progresses. For example in the two-year workshop techniques lines, students can choose a sub-alternative in workshop mechanics or in metal working and welding. In the two year woodwork line, students can choose between alternatives for joiners, boat builders, and pattern makers. Apart from the 23 lines, there are a number of specialised courses to train students for specialised vocations which do not require large numbers of entrants or which do not appear in the curriculum of the 23 lines. Some courses are as short as seven weeks. Examples are listed in Table 2, page 15.

Table 1

THE GYMNASIUM 1971



Clothing	Economics	Technology
Building & Construction	Liberal Arts	Post-Gymnasium Commercial
Distribution & Office Economics	Natural Sciences	
Electrical Engineering	Social Sciences	
Vehicles		
Agriculture		
Consumption		
Foodstuffs		
Processing Techniques		
Forestry		
Social Studies		
Technology		
Wood Technology		
Engineering		
Nursing		

Table 2

Specialised Courses in the Upper School

Consumer/Nursing Field

Catering assistant	8 weeks
Home economics course	1 term
Health visitor	1 year
Restaurant cook	1 term
Ambulanceman	7 weeks
Industrial therapist	3 years
Recreation leader	2 years
Laboratory assistant	8 weeks
X-ray assistant	5 terms
Physiotherapist	2 years
Medical attendant	23 weeks

Commercial/Office Field

Pharmacy technician	2 years
Bank assistant	2 years
Window decorator	2 years
Hotel receptionist	2 years
Shorthand typist	1 year
Buying,sales and advertising personnel	1 year

Technical/Science Field

Furrier	3 years
Baker & confectioner	2 years
Foundry worker,basic course	1 year
Panel beater	2 years
Spray painter	2 years
Circular saw operator	4 weeks
Building caretaker	2 years
Insultation worker	1 year
Road surveyor	1 year
Machine operator	2 years
Forestry foreman	15 weeks
Agriculture,basic course	20 weeks
Agriculture,machine operator	12 weeks

Other Specialised Courses

Bus driver	3 weeks
Gents' hairdresser	3 years
Ladies' hairdresser	3 years
Photographer	2 years
Printing operative	2 years
Mapmaking technician	1 year
Truck driver	14 weeks
Optician	2 years
Taxi driver	7 weeks
Gardening course	2 years
Road safety instructor	5 weeks

These courses are run when there is a need for them. They would not run every year in every upper school. There are also some higher specialised courses which can be taken at the completion of two years in the upper school on an appropriate line. Examples of these are shown in Table 3, page 16.

Table 3

Higher Specialised Courses in the Upper School

Automatic data processing,admin/tech.	1 year
Economic specialised course	1 - 3 terms
Corporate economy for engineers	1 term
Secretary	1 year
Precision mechanic	1 year
Machine assembly	1 year
Repair operative, processing	1 year
Toolmaking technology	1 year
Cabinetmaker, carpenter	1 year
Sawmill technician	1 year
Computer servicing	1 year
Works technician	1 year
Home electronics	1 year
Industrial electronics	1 year
Industrial electrician	1 year
Communications electronics	1 year
Manufacturing operative	1 year
Agricultural management	1 year
Data techniques for engineers	1 year

The number of students taking specialised courses is not high and is closely regulated to avoid training specialists for unemployment.

The popularity of lines has varied over the last decade. In 1979 about 45 per cent of students chose two-year vocational lines, 35 per cent chose three-four-year theoretical lines, and 20 per cent chose two-year theoretical lines. For some years there has been a move away from theory lines to two-year practical lines. In 1982 49 per cent of students were on two-year vocational lines, and only 15 per cent on two-year theoretical lines.

There are some marked regional and sex variations. For example, cities have a much higher proportion of students attending theory courses than the country as a whole, while the forest regions of northern Sweden and Värmland have a larger proportion attending two year practical courses and specialised courses. In spite of vigorous campaigns by the S.Ö. to combat sex bias towards particular courses, there is a clear pattern of female students opting heavily for one set of courses, and male students for another, as shown on Table 4, page 18.

Choice of line is made by the students and their parents in consultation with teachers in the last year of the grundskol. There is a free choice as far as possible, but two important

qualifications have to be made. Firstly, some lines require that some subjects have been studied at advanced level in the comprehensive school. These are:

2-year Technical Line	-	Mathematics
3-year Economics Line 3-year Humanities Line 3-year Social Science Line	-	English
3-year Science Line 4-year Technical Line	-	Mathematics and English

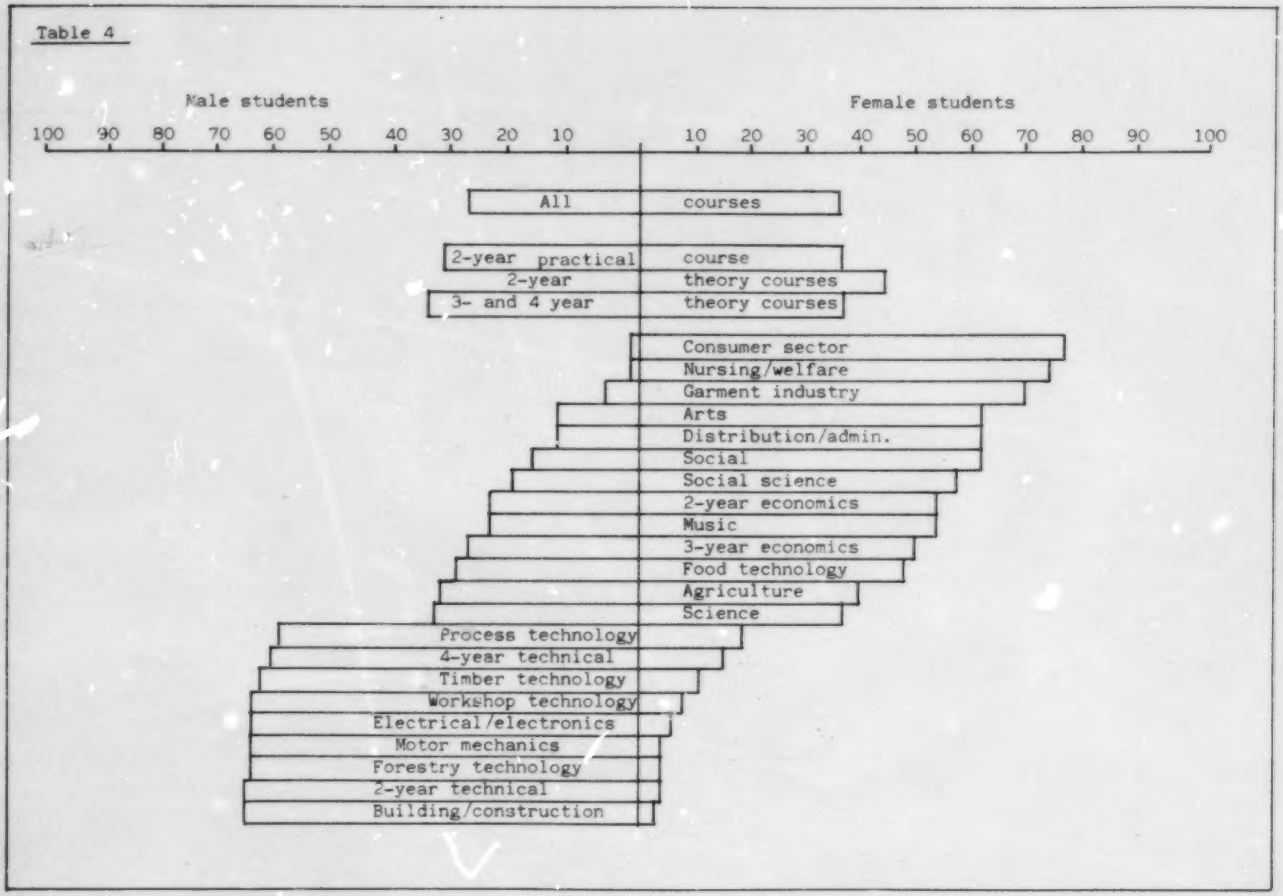
(There is, however, a policy to remove all subject requirements for upper school lines in the near future.)

Secondly, the numbers on each line are controlled nationally so that output is related to the manpower needs of the economy. If some lines are over-subscribed by students, selection has to be made. This is done on the basis of the grades in the grundskola and/or any relevant working experience. There is a vocational practice quota that applies on the two-year economics, social, and technical lines whereby 25 per cent of places is reserved for those who lack formal qualifications but who have acquired relevant job experience or training. There are inevitably a number of disappointed students who have to be content with their second or even third choice of line.

The move to a comprehensive system for the 16+ age group has been pursued consistently from 1962, but two caveats have to be made. Firstly, it is not intended that all upper schools will offer all lines. This would be very difficult to do in sparcely populated areas. Swedes do not think of a school as having only one site, but of an upper school district where a number of buildings provide between them all the required lines. These separate buildings may be under one headteacher or organised as district schools. Secondly, the changeover to the integrated upper secondary school is far from complete. The three types of post-16 schools set up in the 1960s may survive for some years.

Upper schools operate the same hours as the upper grades of the grundskol. Class size is limited to 30 (lower in workshops). Books are free, as are school meals and transport. School size varies from 300 to 2,500. The largest schools tend to be recently built in newly developed urban

Table 4


Male students
Female students
100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
All courses
2-year practical course
2-year theory courses
3- and 4 year theory courses
Consumer sector
Nursing/welfare
Garment industry
Arts
Distribution/admin.
Social
Social science
2-year economics
Music
3-year economics
Food technology
Agriculture
Science
Process technology
4-year technical
Timber technology
Workshop technology
Electrical/electronics
Motor mechanics
Forestry technology
2-year technical
Building/construction

areas. Smaller schools tend to be in rural districts. The older parts of towns are faced with the same problem of falling rolls that is evident in English inner cities. The official aim is to have schools with a roll of 1,000. Although the school work is divided into 23 lines, part of the curriculum is common across all of them. All lines include Swedish and either civics or job orientation, nearly all include English, and most include mathematics. The four syllabuses (shown in Table 5 below) taken from the first year of the course show the low level of differentiation compared with courses in an English sixth form or FE college.

Table 5

Curricula for Sample Lines in the Upper School

3-year Natural Science Line

Swedish
English
German/French or new language
History
Civics or work orientation
Mathematics
General science
PE
Typing
Managerial economics

2-year Economics Line

Swedish
English
Civics or work orientation
Mathematics
PE
Business economics
Typing and trade knowledge
Shorthand
Optional subjects

3-year Social Sciences Line
(identical to 3-year Liberal Arts Line)

Swedish
English
German/French/or new language
History
Civics or work orientation
Mathematics
General science
Music/drawing
PE

2-year Technical Line
(Machine building and Electricity option)

Swedish
English or second language
Mathematics
Physics
Chemistry
Technical subjects
PE

More than 80 per cent of students leaving grundskol transfer to the upper school. In some city districts and new towns, it reaches well into the 90s. If students choose not to enter an upper school, they nevertheless remain the concern of the local education authority which is required to keep in touch with them and offer them counsel up to their 18th birthday. Some find permanent work, though the labour market is geared to an 18 plus entry, and indeed employment laws prevent most factory jobs from being taken by youths under 18. Some outreach courses are run for school-leavers, as are short stimulation courses within the upper school. There is a common pattern, however, whereby numbers of young people take a break for a year or two before entering a course in the upper school. Likewise many students who start on a line drop out for a year or more before returning to complete their course.

The upper school does not confer an award or have a leaving examination. Tests and marks do not play an important part in the education of the student, but some national objective tests are given in some subjects and graded on a five-point scale, using standard rating scales. The desire of many educationalists to dispense with marks altogether, as has happened in Norway, has been thwarted by the need to have some basis for selection to oversubscribed higher education courses.

Higher Education

Higher education has been reorganised following proposals in the report commonly known as U68. The intention behind the bill was to unify the administration of higher education and plan it from a corporate perspective in terms of intake, provision, location or programmes, and future developments. The administration of the system is in the hands of six regional boards based on the existing universities at Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm, Göteborg, Umeå, and Linköping. The regional boards represent commercial, industrial and community interests, and relate higher education provision to the labour market and regional development planning.

Nineteen **högskolar** (higher education institutions) are being created. Six are based on existing universities, four on existing university-type institutions, and nine are new. Course provision in each region will be planned across the whole area to provide comprehensive opportunities, so that courses which were previously the perogative of special semi-autonomous institutions will be made available wherever they are most suitable. This will diminish elitism and difference in prestige between the universities and other higher education institutions. All the högskolar will be centres of research and post-graduate studies. They will each provide national general studies programmes for degrees and equivalent specialisations. There are about 100 of these general studies courses. Their length, major objectives, curriculum and admissions requirements are determined centrally. The regional boards also provide programmes geared to specific regional needs.

Student numbers are expected to rise from 37-42,000 in 1976/7 to 42-48,000 in 1983. Courses are divided into five faculties with controlled numbers as follows:

Estimated Percentage of Students by Faculty

	1967/7	1983/4
Technical	19.6	23.0
Administration/economics	22.6	23.0
Medicine/social work	24.6	24.4
Teaching	27.6	23.1
Cultural/information	5.6	6.5

As the key motive of U68 is a closer relationship of higher education to the labour market, admissions on courses will be restricted in total number as well as by ratio between courses. This is a major change from the past when, except for one or two restricted faculties such as medicine, students who achieved the entrance requirements could register on any

course. Swedish authorities do not wish to see the relationship re-established between selective entry and socio-economic class which existed in the past. To prevent over-representation of students from more prosperous backgrounds, and at the same time move towards recurrent education, a system of entry operates in which entrance to higher education is open to:

1. Any student who has completed a three-year line in an upper secondary school.

2. Any student who has completed a two-year line in the upper secondary school, provided he/she has completed a two-year course in English.

3. Any student who has completed the equivalent of a two-year line including English, by study as an adult in a Folk High School (see page 24) or other similar body.

4. Any person over 24 who has been gainfully employed for four years and possesses a knowledge of English equivalent to two years study at an upper secondary school.

For most study programmes, the student must also have studied subjects central to the course at upper secondary level or equivalent.

If there are more applications for a course than places, the policy is not to take first those who have the highest academic achievement. That would favour those who have studied on the three year theoretical lines (the old gymnasium courses). A quota system allots places within each category proportional to the number of applicants in that category. Selection within categories is based on upper secondary school marks (if they exist) and relevant work experience. Sweden has thus taken a bold step in breaking some of the links between academic achievement and university entrance in an attempt to apply the same philosophy to higher education that prevails in comprehensive and upper schools.

There have, naturally enough, been strong counter-arguments. Student organisations have argued against the principle of restricted access and the power of the Regional Boards. University teachers have shown concern over the dispersal of research away from universities around all 19 hogskolar.

Teachers have argued that changes in admissions procedures will lead to lower academic standards in upper schools. One trend is for students seeking university entrance to opt for two-year lines rather than the traditional three-year line. Some educationalists have argued that the relationship between education and the economy has been conceived in naive and fallacious terms. On the other hand, industrial and commercial representatives have generally welcomed the change. Many teachers, politicians and educationalists believe that a real attempt has been made to give substance to the philosophy of recurrent education and that Sweden is once again pioneering an approach which will influence many other countries. The process of reorganisation is still in its early stages and may take some years to complete.

Adult Education

Sweden puts great stress on the importance of adult education facilities. This is not simply a matter of making provision for adults to study, but also of gearing the educational system to recurrent education so that access to and movement on from qualifying courses is a common rather than an unusual occurrence. Provision for adults takes a number of forms.

1. Study Circles are organised in almost every area. They are intended particularly for those not accustomed to study. They work with a group of 8-10 people with a leader. The group decides on its objectives and methods of work; the leader's function is to facilitate the group and ensure that it makes progress. Almost any subject can be studied. No marks or certificates are awarded. Study circles are organised by 10 associations. The majority are organised by either a trades unions association or a free churches association.

2. Municipal Adult Education Schools (KOMVUX, for short) are provided in most communes and provide courses run in comprehensive schools and upper schools, but with different techniques form those used in the schools. It is common for adults who wish to qualify for a professional training or higher education course to go to adult school to reach the standard required.

3. Basic Education for Adults (GRUNDUX) is provided wherever it is needed for those who are illiterate or whose reading and writing ability is below average.

4. National Adult Schools There are two such schools at Norrköping and Härnösand. Tuition is partly by correspondence, but with five weeks' training periods in each term. They provide the same courses as KOMVUX, for those who do not have access to KOMVUX courses.

5. Folkhögskolar (Folk High Schools) are a traditional feature of Nordic countries. There are more than 100 in Sweden, mostly residential. Many are affiliated to various popular movements though some are run by county councils. Folkhögskolar have a completely free hand in planning their courses, which may last from a few days through to a year, and range from art appreciation and recreational training to courses giving equivalence to the comprehensive and upper school leaving certificates.

Adult education is free (except for some of the study circle courses) and books are often provided free. Adults are encouraged to participate by financial help.

1. Student benefit is awarded to a selected number of adult students. Eligibility depends on such factors as having had only a brief schooling, having a strenuous job and working inconvenient hours, having heavy family commitments, or having social and financial difficulties.

2. Student loans and grants are given for studies in the upper school or in higher education for those over 20 who are following such courses. The amount depends on the length of the course, and whether it is full time or part time. There are supplementary grants for each dependent child.

3. For students on GRUNDUX courses, there is an entitlement for each hour of training which is increased if earnings are lost.

THE CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is responsible for the annual education budget and for drawing up legislation, but national policies are implemented by the Swedish National Board of Education (S.Ö), an autonomous civil service department. The S.Ö. has a governing body which includes representatives from industry and commerce. The Board allocates financial resources to the regions, controls curriculum, teacher training and in-service education, conditions of service, appointment of headteachers and most teaching staff, allocation of courses to institutions, and educational research.

Under the S.Ö. are the 24 County Education Boards, the regional arms of central government in the school system. They are responsible for planning facilities, courses, staffing and resource allocation within their county. Day to day management of schools is the concern of the Local School Boards of the communes, which are bodies made up of elected political representatives. In the mid '70s the number of communes was reduced from 816 to 270. The size of the population they represent varies from Stockholm, with a population of 750,000, to 100 or so communes serving less than 15,000 population. The chief executive officer to the Local School Board is the Director of Schools. In the larger communes he will be a full time officer, but in the smaller areas he will be a school master operating part time. His position does not equate with that of the chief education officer in Great Britain; his powers are fairly limited.

The communes underwrite that portion of school costs not borne by national revenue. The proportion of costs varies between communes as it is adjusted for the relative wealth of the region. As a rough guide the commune pays about 50 per cent of costs for comprehensive schools and 40 per cent for upper schools. Education costs amount to about 20 per cent of the communes' budgets and 11 per cent of the national budget.

Institutions of higher education are supervised by the National Board of Universities and Colleges which is directly responsible to the Cabinet. The Board's main concern is negotiating annual budgets for each institution and in so doing indicate approval of national courses and student numbers. Final budgeting decisions are made by the Cabinet. The Board has a governing body which represents major public

interests. Central control of universities has only existed since the mid '70s. Universities had much greater autonomy before.

School organisation has been autocratic by tradition. The **rektor** (headteacher) retains great authority in running the school, though much of what happens in the school is the result of government rule and negotiation. Two of the rektor's main responsibilities are:

1. To be in charge of school activities and to ensure that they are conducted in compliance with existing regulations.

2. To supervise personnel and ensure the proper discharge of their duties.

Unlike other Nordic countries, Swedish schools do not have by law a joint consultative committee of parents, pupils and teachers, although they have recently been introduced into the upper schools. There are, however, a number of committees within the school.

1. The Class Council. These were established in 1977/78 and consist of all pupils plus the form teacher. They are used for discussion of programmes and work conditions with the intention that pupils will participate in planning and implementing teaching.

2. The Class Conference. This consists of the form teacher, those teachers who take the class in question, student welfare officers and, in the upper school, representatives of the pupils in equal numbers to the rest. It discusses issues related to planning studies, such as the timing of tests and choice of text books. If students' results are discussed, the students do not participate.

3. The Subject Conference. This consists of the headteacher of the subject and all those who teach the subject, plus student representatives in equal numbers. It applies to the lower secondary section in the comprehensive

school and upper school. It makes decisions on curriculum, equipment, pedogogical issues and assessment.

4. The Personnel Conference. This consists of all members of staff - teaching and non-teaching. It meets once a month for general discussion of matters of staff interest and for passing information, but it is not a decision-making body.

5. Rektor's Conference. This consists of the rektor and all headteachers of subjects, and is primarily concerned with budget questions and distribution of grants.

The aim of the 1976 Government Bill on Working Conditions in Schools was that schools become more open, democratic and fluid in their operations. 'Only in an interaction between children and adults can the student develop socially and emotionally and acquire a democratic way of action and thinking. It is therefore important to find forms in which staff and pupils can participate in the decisions which affect their working conditions.' (Skoloverstyrelsen (1980e)).

The particular forms of participation are not yet fully developed and those involved in the process lack experience of making the system work. This will be an area of close scrutiny over the next few years. The Report of the Nordic Council of Ministers concludes, 'There is a lack of certainty and experience in the proposals made and adopted. There is a need for a period of experimentation with different models to see how co-operation and democracy work.'

III : School and the world of work

The structural changes in the Swedish educational system have been more or less completed, although further adjustments will no doubt be needed over the next few years. The centre of interest has moved to the nature of the school's inter-action with its environment, and it is this area that will see the most debate, innovation and change over the next decade.

School-environment relations were not generally seen to be operating at a very intensive or wide-ranging level. Many observers saw the school as isolated behind strong organisational boundaries, mounting courses which followed traditional pedagogic patterns, and run by a professional teaching force with insufficient contact with the outside world and particularly with the labour market. There had been a limited amount of work orientation by means of factory visits or one-week work placements for senior pupils in the comprehensive school, but there were almost no such activities in the upper school. It became a serious criticism in the mid '70s that schools were out of touch with the community and the world of work. As a result the Bill on Working Conditions in Schools was passed by the Riksdag in 1976, and directives from the S.Ö. over the next two years implemented most parts of the bill.

THE INTEGRATED DAY

The bill is concerned with two separate areas, though both are considered part of the same issue - changing the school's relationship with its environment. The first area of concern will be dealt with only briefly here. A major curriculum and organisational change has been made in the comprehensive school to bring community knowledge and presence into the school, and develop pupil's activities which reflect social and cultural life outside the school. This is referred to as the movement to the integrated day. Its precise form is left to the school to work out. Indeed one of the key points is that pupils should be involved in the planning and decision-making of the changes. It is intended that extra periods of time, up to three hours a day, will be interspersed between the standard timetabled lessons and added at the end of the school day. In practice, it is mostly scheduled in the lunch period. This time will be used for informal activities related to the pupils' wishes with regard to the local community context.

It is suggested in the guidelines published by S.Ö. that pupils' groups should be allowed to assume responsibility for certain programmes in the school day; that representatives of social, cultural and recreational agencies should be enlisted

to help; that leisure centres, libraries and premises of voluntary organisations should be utilised. There would be assemblies, where er possible, based on pupil's own activities and covering information, discussions, cultural and social themes. Musical performances by pupils, sporting and hobby interests, ideological and aesthetic interests should all be available. Contributions by political associations or regligious denominations are to be encouraged. All this amounts to a considerable amount of activity extra to the lessons laid down in national curriculum regulations and represents a change in the nature and mood of the school day in the Swedish school. Behind all these extra-curricular activities, which would not be unfamiliar to an English school, lie some clearly articulated objectives which give special meaning to the integrated day:

1. To cater for and stimulate the pupils' need for activity, their need for social contact, and their need for cultural stimulus.

2. To encourage pupils to engage in associations of their own and to ensure that these activities are treated and regarded as the pupils' own concern, organised and directed by them personally.

3. To broaden the range of contacts with adults outside the school and to develop natural and spontaneous relations between pupils and adults.

4. To engage pupils of different ages and gender in the same group.

5. To encourage pupil participation in school decision-making processes.

6. To broaden pupils' knowledge of local associations, cultural and recreational activities and to encourage involvement and active participation in the same.

VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION FOR SCHOOLS

The second concern of the 1976 bill is that of vocational orientation and preparation for the world of work, known in Sweden as **SYO.** Each commune has set up a School, Society and Work Committee (known as **SSA**) which is charged with co-ordinating the work experience programmes of the school. The committee has representatives of unions and employers, and has a full time officer.

In the lower and middle grades of the comprehensive school, pupils are introduced to the work of work in a variety of ways, including the following:

1. Parents are invited to the school to talk to pupils about their jobs.

2. Pupils are released to accompany their parents to work for the day.

3. Groups of pupils are taken on visits to various places of work.

4. Pupils are allocated various work tasks in the school - duplicating and photostating, minor repairs, laying tables and serving lunches, library work etc, if practicable, or, undertaking jobs in nearby institutions such as kindergartens, the post office, or the lower school.

In the senior grades, all pupils have a minimum of six weeks of work experience, though some of this is made up of one-day visits. Each eighth grade pupil will have three placements of one week each, one week of which will be in a workplace connected with technology and manufacture; one week in a workplace connected with commerce, communications, services, agriculture or forestry; and one week in a work place connected with clerical or administrative work, nursing, care, or teaching.

Schools must combine pupils' choices in such a way that boys acquaint themselves with one predominantly female occupation, and girls with a predominantly male occupation.

In the final year each pupil has a work experience placement of at least two weeks and in so far as possible his/her preference is taken into account. Places are notified by the employment office to the SSA committee and the SSA officer then arranges with the school for the places to be filled. Each school has an SYO counsellor who works with the SSA officer to achieve a successful work placement. If there are not enough places notified to him, the SYO counsellor will negotiate with firms to provide places for his pupils. The SYO counsellor is replacing the careers adviser in the schools. The change of name signifies a change of function. His work is less that of giving information and advice on jobs and educational courses, and more that of co-ordinating vocational orientation throughout the school. SYO counsellors are specially trained and do not teach, although under new regulations all are to become trained teachers.

There are no careers lessons as such in the higher grades of the comprehensive school, but the counsellors take group sessions with pupils and conduct much individual work. The official aim is for a more personal analytical approach to vocational counselling in which each pupil is helped to understand his/her individual needs and aims and to come to terms with potentials and possibilities.

Work experience in the upper school is a compulsory component of a number of vocational lines. For the two-year technical line, nine months' work experience is scheduled between the two years; it is therefore, in effect, a three-year course. For the two-year construction course, the first year is spent in school and the second year on a building site under an instructor, with one day a week back in school. In the plumbing and painting options within the construction line, students are out on sites in the second half of the second year. In the engineering and auto engineering lines the system was similar to that in the construction lines but has had to be modified because of the shortage of suitable work places, and the schools have developed fully-functioning work organisations which are run as businesses.

For some courses, the students do part of their training in work places though still subjected to school law and under control of the school (the 'built-in' system). In the auto engineering line, spare parts personnel sub-alternative, and in workshop (metal) line, variant for heavy plate, the training runs for a year, with 32 periods a week at work and six periods at school. Students in the clerical and distribution line go out to work every other week. Students in the nursing line are out for alternate terms, but come back into school for two days a week during placements.

Arrangements with local industry and the problems that arise from them are dealt with at local training negotiation meetings at which trades unions, employers and the school are

represented. In the theoretical four-year technology line, students have two periods of work experience in the summers of their last two years. On the two-year social sciences line, a one-week work experience is compulsory. It is voluntary in many other theoretical lines and some of the vocational lines such as consumer line. There is, however, a general move to increase the work experience element in such lines within the practical constraints of the particular locality. Students in the longer work experience placements are paid as workers, though not always the full wage. In many cases they are taken on as trade union members.

PROBLEMS OF VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION (SYO)

A problem that has already emerged is that many school teachers, particularly subject specialists, leave vocational orientation to the SYO counsellor. Although the intention of the S.Ö. is that SYO work will pervade the school and inform all parts of the curriculum, this is not how many teachers see it. One S.Ö. publication says, '...the goals and instructions laid down for SYO activities make SYO the joint responsibility of all staff. The basic idea is for SYO to be conducted on a teamwork basis, with school management, teachers, SYO officers, and others co-operating in its various phases ... expectations and demands should not be exclusively focussed on the SYO officer ... experience has shown however that little success has been scored in securing the participation of all members of the school community'.

There are major efforts, both in basic and in-service training, to change the perceptions of staff and school managers towards SYO. An improved organisation of SYO in schools will include an expanded definition of the function of the SYO counsellor and more resources at his command. Teachers are being encouraged to participate in two-week work experience schemes on the shop floor, and headteachers experience four weeks of job placements (two weeks in a factory, two weeks in a social work agency) as part of the school leader programme of in-service training.

A second problem is the extent to which the pupils' work experience can be integrated into his class room education where the lessons he has learned and the perceptions he has formed can be critically analysed and developed. Without this reinforcement the placement will be seen as an isolated event, too short to have much impact on the pupil. This accounts for some of the negative feedback coming from pupils.

A third problem is that of finding enough work placements. An average school might well have 150-200 pupils in each year. Each pupil will need four placements in the three years of grades 7-9 which is more than 200 places per year. SYO

councillors, local employment officers, and SSA officers are heavily stretched to find enough places, assess their suitability, allocate pupils, visit them during their work experience, and follow up the success or otherwise of the placement afterwards. Industrial and commercial organisations, although very supportive, find it difficult to do the job as well as they would wish, because of the demand. For example, the manager in charge of training at a Volvo plant at Göteborg which has 8,000 employees, finds places for 700-800 pupils a year from the comprehensive and upper schools. He is hard pressed to find the places or supervise the pupils to his own satisfaction. In Uppsala, the young people were most favourably inclined to work in caring occupations or garages, and were least favourable to factory work, though this was where many work placements had to be generated.

There are disagreements as to the main purpose of work experience. Employers and some pupils and parents see it as part of job-training which will help towards procuring employment, whereas teachers and educationalists see it as a general educative introduction to the world of work.

It will be necessary for employment offices and schools to work closer together and with greater understanding. It will probably be necessary to increase the manpower available for youth unemployment specialists in employment offices, SSA officers, and SYO counsellors in schools, in order to avoid undue strain in which understanding and co-operation between the various agencies are only nurtured with difficulty.

It is interesting to note that these five problems exist in Great Britain in very similar form in relation to the work experience schemes of the Manpower Services Commission.

MEASURES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

The situation in Sweden differs from that in Great Britain in two important particulars:

1. In Sweden, 80-90 per cent of young people remain in full time education until age 19. Unemployment in Sweden is thus a pheonomenon associated with the post-19 age group and attention has been focused much more on disadvantaged groups such as women, the elderly, and the handicapped in the labour market.

2. Sweden, unlike most other European countries, puts a very high priority on full employment and takes strong interventionist measures to keep this so. It regards employment as each individual's right which the state must endeavour to satisfy by economic planning and strategic interventions in industries and regions at risk. Various grants and subsidies exist for the development of industry in the regions. Relief work projects are widely used to overcome temporary employment recessions, seasonal unemployment, and unemployment of older, handicapped or locally-tied-down manpower. Sheltered and semi-sheltered work is available for those who cannot obtain work in the open market.

The government has a stand-by programme for relief work projects and for placing public orders with industry to compensate selectively for redundancies caused by recession. Various schemes encourage industries facing redundancies to retain surplus labour under partial government subsidies. From 1978 a temporary recruitment subsidy was introduced, similar to the Special Temporary Employment Programme (STEP) measures in Great Britain

A well-developed system of retraining is essential to such interventionist strategies. The labour market training system has a capacity of more than one per cent of the labour force. With courses lasting an average of four months, more than three per cent of the labour force can be trained in one year.

Training schemes of from a few weeks up to two years are arranged by the labour market authorities in co-operation with schools and employers. Such courses are available for those who are unemployed or in precarious employment conditions, or those who are employed but willing to take leave or resign to train in shortage skills. Courses are free of charge and trainees receive subsistence allowances which exceed unemployment pay and are roughly 80 per cent of ordinary wages after tax. About half the participants are women and this scheme has been seen as especially important to help female entry into the labour market.

The courses are held in either permanent or temporary training centres, administered jointly by the Labour Market Board and the S.Ö. They are also held in the vocational sections of the upper schools. Employers can, during the slack period, retrain staff instead of laying them off and get a special

government subsidy per trainee hour. This programme expanded from 10,000 to 100,000 during the recession of the late '70s. Firms retraining their staff and intending to increase their work force also get a special subsidy, as do those employing handicapped or elderly workers and those allowing women to try male occupations (or vice versa).

One further device that is widely used is to pay removal grants to enable unemployed people to move from areas of high unemployment to regions where employment is available. About 20,000 people (about 20 per cent of all internal movers) receive their grant each year, generally at the instigation of the employment service. Research into cost benefit of the removal scheme has shown the individual makes some sacrifice or only small gains in moving, but there are considerable economic benefits to society. The grants have therefore been increased to include a starting grant, search travel, removal costs, and allowances for temporary maintenance of two households.

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

All young people under 18 are the responsibility of the local schools board whether they are in school or not. Special officers are appointed to follow up and advise young people out of school and out of permanent work. In Göteborg, which has pioneered work in this area, 11 counsellors have been appointed in addition to the SYO counsellors in each school. Four help in schools and eight are attached to four centres which cater for the young unemployed. The centres run eight-week courses concentrating on social and life skills and basic orientation to work, including some diagnostic counseiling. Part of the course is spent in work experience, for example in Göteborg's shipyards. The counsellors who arrange the work experience (though officially it is the job of the employment office) attempt to move the students on to an appropriate vocational course in a school at or before the conclusion of the course. Not all young people go on the eight-week courses and the counsellors' caseloads include those with delinquency, drug, alcohol or severe social problems.

A redundant factory at Södertälje, near Stockholm was purchased by the commune and converted to a centre by young unemployed people together with students from the upper school on work experience. It now provides ten-week courses for 70 unemployed at a time - 280 per year - which will cope substantially with the provision needed for unemployed youth.

The scale of the problem must be appreciated. Nearly all young people stay on at school at 16, and of the 10-15 per cent who leave, some get jobs. In Stockholm Commune there were in January 1982, 909 registered 16-18 unemployed and

2,399 for the whole of the Stockholm county. It is true, and a little alarming, that these numbers represent almost a 100 per cent increase over the previous 12 months, but the problem is still small-scale.

Six youth centres have been set up in Stockholm as guidance and contact centres for the young unemployed. They are staffed by two vocational guidance officers, a social worker, and a school welfare officer. There is also a vocational guidance officer working with immigrants and one with handicapped young unemployed. Some of their work deals primarily with social problems, but options are available nationally for helping the young into employment:

1. An induction course of four weeks introduces young people to the various school programmes available, teaches them something about the labour market and how to set about getting a job, and includes some work tasting as well as factory and school visits.

2. There is an introduction to work scheme which can be as long as 40 weeks, although most are 10-12 weeks. The young person is taken on at a place of work, although still registered as a student at the local school, and is visited by SYO counsellors. A contract is drawn up between the employment officer and the employer, in a similar way to MSC work experience schemes in Britain.

3. Young people can start apprenticeship training in a firm rather than in a vocational line of a school. The numbers allowed to do this are carefully controlled (170 in Stockholm in 1982). The firms receive 40 per cent of the wage costs from the government, but some communes have topped this figure up.

4. An experiment in Stockholm runs a special course through the schools, with three-and-a-half - four days in a firm and one day in school on apprenticeship training. It is a two-year course and is confined to specific skills expected to be in high demand.

5. A recent initiative encourages firms to take on young workers for six months with one day a week release to school, the worker receiving a living allowance from the government, and the firm receiving a training allowance from the government.

The parallel of some of these schemes to those of the Manpower Services Commission in Great Britain is marked.

Another scheme which, though not directly related to the young unemployed, exists for those who are too disturbed or apathetic to benefit from full time schooling. They can spend a part of each week in work experience and the remainder in a special withdrawal class in the school. The aim is that by the time such people reach the age of 16, they will be ready to enter a course in the upper school or will find full employment.

IV : The characteristics of Swedish education

A 1979 report of the Nordic Council of Ministers identified the following significant common features in the education aims of their various countries, as stated in legislation and regulations:

Co-operation with the home.

Assisting pupils towards self-realisation.

Preparing pupils for work and co-determination in a democratic society.

Promoting intellectual liberty and tolerance.

Fostering the cultural heritage.

Helping each child to have genuine access to equal opportunities in education.

That is how the Scandinavians see the key aims of their system. Looked at by outsiders, the following characteristics particularly distinguish the Swedish system from that of other countries.

1. Education is seen as part of a coherent, consciously planned social strategy which defines the kind of society in which the Swedes wish to live and the communal relations they wish to foster. Education is not seen as a separate or autonomous part of state activity which can live by its own rules. It follows that considerable attention is given to the relationship of the school to the environment and the development within students of feelings of responsibility towards the community and of attachment towards such societal values as tolerance and intellectual liberty.

2. Fundamental to the educational system is the concept of equality of education for each citizen. The Swedes have been refining their concept of equality of education in pursuit of their goal of uncoupling provision in education from socio-economic class, gender or other differentiating categories. Particular emphasis has been placed on providing a common undifferentiated experience for students for as long as possible, and keeping access open to all future routes (or conversely avoiding the blocking of some routes to some sections of society). Free and open access is perhaps the phrase that best expresses the current Swedish intention. Open access is likely to involve measures of positive discrimination as a limited strategic policy.

3. Schools lay emphasis on the personal development of the student and encourage his individual autonomy. This expresses a deeply-held value in Swedish society. Birgit Stenholm, then Director of Schools at Täby, commented: 'The personal development of each individual and independence are to be promoted at the same time as his capacity for communal action is cultivated and he is made aware of his responsibility'. One aspect of this is the reduction of competitive marks and examinations as far as is possible. The rights of the individual student and the importance of this self-realisation or self-actualisation are reflected in changes in curriculum which are currently under discussion. The Swedish education system takes a strongly proactive line in the encouragement of this development. 'The school shall nurture the young. This means that the school shall actively and willfully influence and encourage children and young people to embrace the fundamental values of our democracy and to let these find expression in practical action'. (Swedish Ministry of Education, 1980).

4. The school system is closely related to the labour market and economic structure of the country. Sweden has a planned economy and the assessment of estimated manpower needs is an essential part of planning. The provision of lines in the upper school and control of national courses in higher education are based on an attempt to relate student output to labour market need without undue or premature vocational specialisation. While the allocation of students to lines reflects the expected needs of the economy, the broad-based curriculum within each line counteracts the worst aspect of specialisation. Common schooling up to 16 delays differentiation.

5. The educational system is very centralised. The S.Ö. in Stockholm controls schools to a degree that teachers in Great Britain might see as oppressive. Curricula and much of school organisation are determined centrally and room for independent variation or initiative by the school is limited. There is a source of tension between the control of local activity by central government and the strong Swedish tradition of community and municipal government. It is true that within schools staff often assert their professional role of interpreting government directives very loosely. The government intends to increase the flexibility of action open to schools and communes, though what this will mean in practice is not yet clear. It is arguable that, although the Swedish system is highly centralised, it is more participative than most systems and that more bodies take effective part in determining central policy than is common in most countries. The strong influence of trades unions, employers' federations, education unions, and various popular movements, plus the system of investigating-by-commission as a method of the creation of public policy, have, in the view of the 1980 OECD Report, created a system dependent upon public opinion within a working democracy.

6. The government's aim is to introduce a greater level of democratisation into schools and colleges so that pupils and teachers together can practise the co-operative and communal working life they teach as an important aspect of Swedish life. The existing system has given great authority to the head of the institution and little to the staff. There has not been the growth of collegial forms of government that have been apparent in the post-16 sector in Great Britain since 1970, though it is also true that Swedish comprehensive school headmasters do not enjoy the extraordinary discretionary power of British headmasters.

7. Clear ideological and philosophical values underlie the Swedish education system. These are deeply interwoven into the fabric of Swedish society. The extent to which schools reflect this was made evident in the project carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. This body compared student performance in 19 counries over a number of years in the 1960s and 1970s. In evaluating the values that emerged from social science studies, the project found that, compared to those of other countries, Swedish pupils:

- Have pronounced anti-authoritarian attitudes;
- Have a very positive attitude towards civil rights and liberties;
- Have the most positive attitude of all towards equal rights for women;
- Have, together with New Zealand, the most positive attitude towards equal rights for different groups in society;
- Have relatively little confidence in the possibilities of natural science improving human conditions.

Such attitudes come partly from the teaching of social science but as much from the informal internalisation of the values implicit in the texture of Swedish society.

V : Future developments

Nothing in Sweden stays still for long. Important developments are already on the horizon. Two in particular may well have a marked influence on Swedish educational provision.

1. There is a firm commitment to decentralise many activities from the S.Ö. in Stockholm to communes and individual schools. It is a political decision that such a policy is in line with the aim that schools should develop closer links with the local environment. It is also influenced by economic considerations. The stated aim of the government in the budget for 1981-82 is to reduce public expenditure (which has always been very high in Sweden), and in particular to achieve a two per cent cut in real expenditure on schools. Thus the flexibility now offered to schools can be justified under both headings. Schools are being encouraged to co-ordinate and rationalise classes wherever possible. Maximum size for many classes has been 16, but now a rektor can keep a class of 17 intead of splitting it, and use the period gained for another sub-option. The minimum class size is eight but now, if the numbers are between eight and 12, the periods taught are reduced by 25 per cent. All external staff development courses, including school leader courses for rektors and deputies, are financed so that temporary replacements can be employed. The school can now cover the absence from within and use the money for other purposes. Rektors have been given virement over their money and can use it to the best purpose they see. There has been some decentralisation of control over curriculum in comprehensive schools and the LGR 80 regulations forces local school boards to design some of their own courses (though this should not be exaggerated). Control over staff development has been substantially devolved to the communes from the S.Ö. Perhaps the most dramatic change is that there are to be self-study periods without teacher supervision. This was originally intended for all classes, but the opposition of schools was such that it has been confined to theoretical lines in the upper school for five periods per week. A British sixth-form teacher would not find this very novel, but it is a new experience in Swedish schools. One net result of all this is a substantial decrease in the number of civil servants employed in the S.Ö. in Stockholm. It is difficult for an outsider to assess the degree of decentralisation that is taking place. The education system remains, by British standards, fairly well centralised.

2. A commission of enquiry into upper secondary education was set up in 1976 and reported in December 1981. Its proposals, which contain radical suggestions for change, are currently receiving comment from interested parties. Formal proposals will be presented to the Riksdag in 1983 and changes will be implemented in 1985. Details of the changes, which will

almost certainly be modified and altered before 1985, are less important than the thinking behind them. The proposals seem to have taken the following factors into account:

(a) Education in the upper school must be of help to all, including those who have experienced difficulties and deprivations.

(b) Students must be prepared for a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society.

(c) Students must be prepared for a more caring society, or what the commission calls the 'gentler society'. 'The Inquiry would prefer (a direction) in which working life will be characterised by co-operation between different groups where the individual is able to influence his job, where team work is developed and fellowship and unity prevail.'

4. The study of society and of **medborgarkunskcap** (citizenship) is pivotal to the curriculum and should include the study of traditional cultures.

5. Society and education must move with, not against, technology. The commission finds the current system of 23 two-or three-year lines too inflexible to satisfy these objectives. It was particularly concerned that there was little scope for change once a student started a particular course. Having seen it through to the end, the student might well be in a situation of limited job opportunity or job appeal.

The present proposals envisage three major educational fields: economic studies, social studies and technical studies. Each field will offer long programmes roughly corresponding to the present three-year theoretical lines, and short programmes corresponding to the two-year vocational lines. There will however be much greater commonality between programmes then at present - more theory in the short programmes and more practical elements in the long ones. This will enable students to transfer with greater ease. Work experience will be included in all courses. Curricula will be designed so that there is maximum flexibility of movement for students, and avoidance of premature commitment to a specific vocational outcome. The process of consultation and choice will start in the final years of the grundskol.

It is also intended that study methods will become more varied and more adapted to the particular needs and wishes of the students.

The Swedish concern to avoid bias in recruitment to educational fields and various options is expressed in the report. There is particular concern that there should not be a sex bias in recruitment to those areas which by tradition have attracted predominantly male or female students. One can therefore expect a degree of positive discrimination in favour, for example, of women on recruitment to technical courses, and of men on para-medical courses.

Swedish educationalists do not lack boldness or vision. The sweep of their ambition contains high levels of risk and some inevitable failures. It would be untrue to suggest that high intentions in social engineering have not occasionally come to grief. It is worth remembering the verdict of the examining report (OECD,1980). They were, 'impressed, even overwhelmed by the magnitude and the results of the changes ... this relatively small country has earned its leadership role by the enormous input of thought, planning, feeling and resources of all kinds that it has committed to doing the best it can for all its citizens'.

Professor Maurice Kogan, in a critical review of the OECD report, summed up the position well: 'The Swedes earn the right to attempt radical change because they always put themselves in a position to learn from their own achievements and mistakes, and to allow others to learn from them ... They do not regard their experiences as a private matter to be contemplated by policy-makers behind closed doors - their problems arise from having tried large-scale reform, not from avoiding the larger issues that have to be faced by any society that wishes to be both civilised and productive' (Kogan,1980)

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